

MOTION BY SUPERVISOR MARK RIDLEY-THOMAS

June 25, 2013

RELATES TO S-1

Engaging the Sanitation Districts of Los Angeles County on Storm Water and Urban Runoff Issues

There are significant environmental, economic and public health arguments for moving forward with a comprehensive initiative to address storm water and urban runoff pollution, and storm water conservation in Los Angeles County. Los Angeles County beaches all too frequently do not meet conventional public health standards. Local entities are not optimizing opportunities to capture storm water, making Los Angelenos reliant on outside sources of water. In addition, the County of Los Angeles (the County) and all of the cities within the County must comply with the Clean Water Act or face significant penalties and potentially uncontrollable litigation costs.

The new municipal storm water permit (the permit) issued by the Los Angeles Regional Water Quality Board contains significant additional requirements regulating everything from the levels of metal and bacteria to toxic sediments in the waterways. For the first time, the new permit creates meaningful opportunities for interagency collaboration, which many municipalities have embraced. While a collaborative approach may prove to be efficient and cost effective, compliance with the permit is undoubtedly going to be expensive, not just for the County and the Los Angeles County

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Flood Control District, but for all of the individual cities who are directly accountable for their storm water and urban runoff.

The proposed Clean Water, Clean Beaches Measure, which was deliberated over the past year by the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors, created a candid discussion on the significant need for additional revenue to address the costs of storm water and urban runoff quality, and storm water conservation. However, a variety of important questions remain unresolved pertaining to the governance, scope, and methodology of a funding initiative. More time is needed to increase awareness of the environmental, economic and regulatory consequences if resources are not augmented, and an initiative needs to be better defined for broader support amongst stakeholders.

Moving forward, there may be an opportunity to engage other water resource agencies, most notably the Sanitation Districts of Los Angeles County (the Sanitation Districts), in this effort. Sanitation Districts are public agencies created under State law to manage wastewater and solid waste on a regional scale and consist of 23 independent special districts serving about 5.4 million people throughout the County. The service area covers approximately 815 square miles and encompasses 78 cities and unincorporated territory. The Sanitation Districts have developed a unique expertise in converting wastewater and solid waste into resources such as recycled water, renewable energy and reusable materials.

There are multiple benefits of collaborating with the Sanitation Districts; it will allow for an evaluation of potential opportunities to utilize the Sanitation District's infrastructure to capture and treat urban runoff. In addition, given that the Sanitation Districts are a regional utility, it may be useful to view Los Angeles County's efforts to address urban runoff under similar auspices and evaluate the governance system of the Sanitation District as a potential model.

I THEREFORE MOVE THAT THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS:

1. Send a five signature letter to the Executive Officer of the Sanitation Districts of Los Angeles County requesting their collaborative participation to:
 - a. Evaluate, on a regional level, methods to address the treatment of urban runoff; and
 - b. Assess the governance system of the Sanitation Districts as a potential model to improve storm water and urban runoff quality;
2. Direct the Chief Executive Officer in coordination with the Director of the Department of Public Works to:
 - a. Collaborate with the Sanitation Districts of Los Angeles County, County Counsel, and other stakeholders on this motion;
 - b. Identify and outreach to other water suppliers and conveyers who should be a core participant in the development of a comprehensive approach to address urban runoff and storm water concerns; and
 - c. Report back to the Board of Supervisors within 120 days in writing with their findings.

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